2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

The hearth or stove was the focal point of the barely furnished living room. When winter came the small fires burned steadily, but slowly as though undernourished. For fuel, people in Dragalevtsy used small branches brought from the village forest up on the mountainside, though a few bought coal from the mine at Pernik. No longer did they burn cow dung. Older people of the family felt that fire was sacred because it could bring on great disasters; therefore, it should not be treated lightly. The aged would never think of spitting in the fire, and gravely deplored this disrespect of the young. This attitude is perhaps an ancient survival of the days when the Bulgarians were sunworshipers.

The walls of the homes were pierced by comparatively few windows, which were small and were kept tightly shut during the winter to keep out the "dangerous" night air. The rest of the wall space was brightened somewhat by gaudy calendars decidedly patriotic in theme. The iron bedsteads or the heavy wooden beds which lined the walls contrasted strikingly with some homemade cradle or trundle bed reserved for the succession of young. A kneading trough stood near the door, usually covered to serve as a table. The only other table was a low circular *sofra* around which people ate seated on three-legged stools. I once asked a peasant:

"Why do all of your little stools have three legs instead of four?"

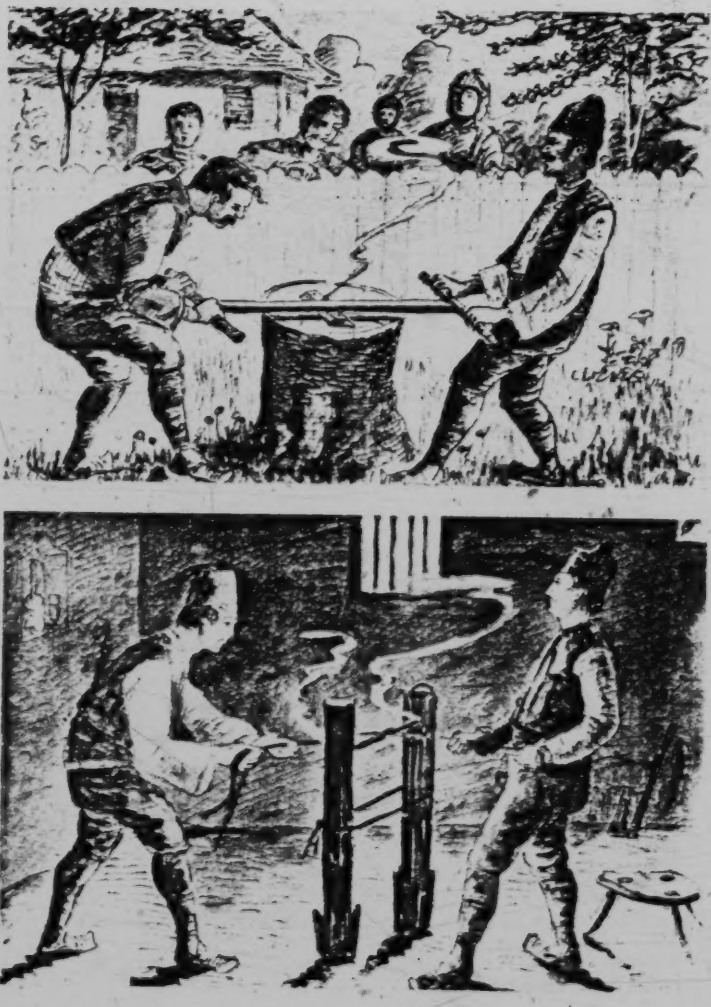
"Far back in the past people used such stools and so we use them also. And I guess they are easier to be made and also are cheaper; furthermore, some people think that they keep a better balance since on a three-legged stool there is one less leg to wear down and become uneven than would be the case with a four-legged stool."

I have not been able to discover any flaw in this example of peasant logic. The same woman once explained to me why the people use the *sofra*, which is two feet high:

"This height was chosen through the ages because if it were lower, people would have to sit on the dirty floor. If it were the height of a regular table such as people have in the taverns, the three-legged stools would be too short. Therefore, the height of our table and the height of our stools are intimately connected."

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs
Bulgaria EE1
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

B
CM
372
291
342
352



Fire making in Bulgaria and Macedonia
(From drawings by V. Titelbach)

[Facing page 144]

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Montenegrins EF5
Bulgaria EE1
Croats EF4

fire is produced for healing, it is a good sign if it is made easily. If, after a number of trials, no spark is obtained or the dry grass, tinder or cotton to be lit does not catch fire, it is a sign that the sickness is not to be cured. At the same time, every precaution is taken to choose dry materials and fine weather. So it comes about that the act of divination may be considered sufficient for a cure and the rite is found cut down to the mere production of fire. As in an alternative noted in Montenegro, the victim of fire is advised to strike fire from two flints held behind his back. No other fire is laid and nothing is applied to the sore.

At Gospić for *kresavac*, a kind of boil (*kresiti*, to strike fire; cf. *kres*, need fire), sparks are struck over a bowl of water held over the patient so that they fall into the water. At Gablenici new fire was a cure for *strava*. It was made by fixing a horizontal rod about 50 centimetres long in two vertical supports, in which two small holes fitted the ends of the horizontal stick fairly tightly. A cord was twisted twice round the horizontal rod and worked backwards and forwards by two men, while another held a handful of tow at one of the holes. At Doce the apparatus was made of lime wood, and fire produced by means of a leather strap worked by one man. From this fire a heap of chips and rose haws was lit. At Gacko, for *krasta*, fire was struck from iron on an anvil, with a hammer. This cure was the monopoly of a gipsy smith, who charged a fixed price. The first sparks served to light a piece of cotton and this a piece of green homespun, some lime twigs, nine twigs of blackberry, and hips of the wild rose, and these things were burnt to ash. The ash was mixed with young fat and applied with a feather to the scabs three evenings running, at dusk, under the eaves.[1]

On another occasion I was told that fire was made by the friction of dry lime wood or oak (*Quercus cerris*) or simply to use lime wood charcoal mixed with fat as an ointment. New fire is made during epidemics among men, or cattle. At Nevrokop the apparatus is made of fir, and the fire makers

[1] E. Lilek, Gl.Z.M. v.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1
Montenegrins EF5

B
372
755

should be twins, or the eldest and youngest brothers of a family. The horizontal and upright sticks should also be twins, that is, made of branches growing from the same root or axis, and dried for at least three years.[1] The instance which I found near Plav was for skin disease or epidemics. A large apparatus of the kind described above was made entirely of a tree struck by lightning and was set up in the middle of the village street. It required considerable effort to produce fire and was not often done. It was also apparently a rite adapted to the usages on which I could not obtain definite information. Trees struck by lightning seem to be frequently recommended. Of other woods cornel or dogwood is the usual hard wood and lime the soft component, or ash and lime, or lime on poplar. However, it is possible to produce fire without using two different woods, and the most usual wood is lime, or where lime is not plentiful willow, and other woods are hazel, beech, juniper, spruce, pine. It is not clear that there are prohibitions, except as regards trees which are never used under any circumstances, but it is perhaps worth while noting that I myself only once found oak wood used even where it is plentiful and suitable for the purpose, and in literature it only occurs once or twice. Fire can also be produced by drilling an upright stick into a fixed, horizontal plank, or into a standing tree which has been struck by lightning, or into a door post, or by rubbing two sticks together. A search for a magical formula accompanying the rite has been unrewarded. In Lilek's description the gipsy smith is said to have mumbled something. In my own observations I did not get as much as that. I have heard orthodox prayers, rather confused ones, being said while new fire was made by a family to re-light the hearth fire (Bosnia).

M
372
755
824

S
372
[782]

Live fire is obtained by the friction of wood, by striking flints, or flint and steel; by the refraction of the sun's light through a glass bottle of water; or it can be struck from iron.

Fire from wood is obtained by rubbing a stick over a flat

[1] Cf. I. Zahariev, *Kjustendilsko Kraille*, Sb.N.U. xxxii (1918), pp. 147, 148.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Croats EF4
Montenegrins EF5
Bulgaria EE1

755 731 372 kept holy for the next year. At some places there are a number of ready-made tunnels kept for this purpose. If it is inconvenient to dig under a river bank or under a tree, a ditch is made which is roofed over with planks and earth. The tunnel may be wide enough to allow a pair of oxen to pass.[1]

S M 755 751 The diseases treated in this way are mainly severe epidemics such as small-pox, dysentery, etc., skin diseases ('fiery' complaints), *vukojedina*, *zmijojedina* (Hercegovina, Montenegro), and new fire is made as a preventive after the appearance of a mad wolf or a mad dog. Of the various pests among sheep and cattle that can be treated with new fire it is interesting that the popular names for them frequently re-echo the element of fire and thunder.

S 608 Above I have quoted a case where the fire makers had to become brothers. In any case, they are often called upon to embrace or to drink together before and after their work. Although it is probable that to act together in a secret cult creates a special sympathy or intimacy, there is no other indication of its involving a legal tie. On the other hand, B 372 608 brotherhood can be made at the hearth, and an instance which occurred in Bulgaria gives an idea of the sacredness of fire. On St John's Day (January 7th), the priest and a few near relatives were invited to the house of the man who made the proposal of brotherhood. The fire on the hearth was raked into two separate heaps and a board was placed across the hearth between the fires. The men who were to

[1] S. Trojanović, *Vatra* (1930), is a compilation of accounts of fire ceremonies with many new descriptions of those witnessed by the author, upon which I have freely drawn. Other sources are E. Lilek, *Vadjenje žive vatre u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Gl.Z.M. v (1893); V. Titelbach, *Internat. Arch. f. Ethnographie*, XIII (1900), p. 1 *passim*; M. Miličević, *Život Srba Seljaka*, pp. 310, etc.; V. Titelbach, *Roznecovani 'živeho ohňe' u Jihoslovanů*, Česky Lid, v, 4 (1896), pp. 341, etc.; N. Zega, *Volovska Bogomolja*, Glas. Ethnografskog Muzeja u Beogradu, II (1927); F. S. Krauss, *Slavische Feuerbohrer*, Globus, LIX (1891), pp. 140, etc.; I. Zahariev, *Kjustendilsko Kraiłe*, Sb.N.U. p. 147 *passim*; V. Decev, Sb.N.U. XIX, p. 90; Sb.N.U. XII, 136, pp. 7–9; L. Pečo, *Običaji i Verovanja iz Bosne*, S.E.Z. XXXII, p. 48; T. M. Buletić, *Temnić*, S.E.Z. VI, pp. 287–8.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1
Croats EF4
Slovenes EF7
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

keep vows of brotherhood stepped on to the ends of the plank with the right foot. Before beginning to read the Gospel and prayers, the priest asked them in turn three times whether they believed in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and whether they believed in the Fire.[1]

At Planinica for epilepsy, the doctoress visited the patients' house and divided the fire into two parts in the same way and stood over the fires. Other members of the family then pulled the patient in a trough three times under her legs and between the fires. A footprint of a man, or the track of an animal or an insect which was afterwards found in the ashes over which the trough had passed, was given to the patient in water.[2]

Live fire is also carried round the village or round the flocks and herds during an epidemic, and fire is carried in the same way irrespective of immediate needs at a ceremony variously called *Olalija*, *Alalija*, *Lila*, etc., which takes place particularly in pastoral districts, on Ascension, St John's Day, St Peter's Day, or one of the earlier feasts round about Easter. Torches of dried bark (cherry or birch) are borne in forked sticks. In the Holmoljski district the name *Alalija* is given to large fires of straw, etc., lit in or near the village in honour of the dead at the beginning of the spring carnival. People dance round the fires and try to pull one another over them. The shepherds also come down from the pastures bringing their torches which are carried round the village.[3] There are other familiar fire rites on St John's Eve, Easter Eve, St George's Eve, or at Easter. Sometimes the fires are lit on hills all round a

[1] N. A. Načov, *Za Pobratimtvo*, pp. 60–1.

[2] S. Trojanović, *Glavni Srpski Žrtveni Običaji*, pp. 43, 44.

[3] S.E.Z. XIX, *op. cit.* Cf. M. Miličević, *Život Srba Seljaka*, pp. 133, etc.; M. Arnaudov, *Studie vorhu Bolgarskite Obradi i Legendi*, Spisanie na Bolg. Akademia na Naukite, IV (1912), p. 16 *passim*; N. Zega, *op. cit.*; S.E.Z. XXIII, p. 102, XIV, p. 333; Zb. X, pp. 1, 52, I, pp. 247, etc., etc.; Sb.N.U. XII, pp. 7–9; Zíbrt, *Seznam pověr a zvyklostí pohanských z* VIII *věku* (1894), pp. 90–3; Voraček, *Pohanské obětí u Bulharů*, Slov. Sbornik (1883), pp. 539, etc. Cf. V. Harusin, *K voprosu o počitanie ognja*, Etnog. Obozrenia (1906); G. Vinogradov, *Samovračivanie i skotoloženie*, Živaja Starina, XXIV (1915).

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1
Slovenes EF7
Croats EF4
Contemporary Macedonians EF8
B
CM 3 31 C 372 C BM 31 [787]
B [755] [821]
S 121 17 372

village. These ceremonies to the best of my knowledge survive in Northern Croatia, the Dalmatian hinterland, Slavonia, Macedonia, in Bulgaria and sporadically in Serbia, and that mainly in pastoral districts. It is now not usual that the fire on these occasions is new fire. Divining is practised; the aim seems to be mainly apotropaeic and often specifically relates to health, or to prevent magic, or the attacks of witches. The ashes of the fires are kept for medicine or to promote the fertility of animals. Not only do these ceremonies change their dates but there is a tendency to amalgamate rites in which fire takes a part. Some authorities are of the opinion that the various fire ceremonials are ultimately of the same origin. Arnaudov distinguished two main types: one that is cathartic, and one that is exorcismal in aim; and among the latter he classed the celebration of the summer solstice, which in his opinion has sometimes been transferred to the spring.[1]

Mannhardt adopted from Kuhn[2] the identity of the need fire with St John's fire and attributed the same motives to the Roman Palilia. Prof. Trojanović, who has recently published a valuable collection of fire ceremonies, seems to follow the same train of thought, and elaborates the theme 'fire circle = sun disc'. He has sought his parallels, however, in Vedic literature, which cannot possibly give us a prototype on account of its date. The most striking similarity in the Balkan and Indian ritual of new fire is the inspection of melted fat, which the domestic sacrificer in India was instructed to gaze upon, and to show to the other members of his family. In one passage the ghee is called 'thunder'—a term that I am unable to explain.[3] These passages, however, refer to sacrifices to Agni, and I am not sure that Trojanović is right in regarding need fires as sacrificial, although sacrifices occur sporadically. The Indian ritual further demands

[1] M. Arnaudov, *Spisanie na Bolg. Akademia na Naukite*, IV, p. 30.
[2] Cf. Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*, p. 50, and Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, I (1875–7), pp. 519, etc.
[3] E.g. *Satapatha-Brâhmana*, III, S.B.E. XXVI, pp. 106, 169.